



Counting and Memory Program

(Target Audience: 9-12)

Many ancient peoples kept track of important events in their lives by using objects. Before writing was invented, they also used objects or special markings to count and keep records. Without a way to write words or numbers, they relied on their memories much more than we do today to keep track of things, events, or stories. But they had their own special inventions to help them remember. The *quipu* was one.

The Incas had a form of writing using symbols called ideographs, which are graphic symbols or pictures. But they had another way of recording important information. They invented a method called *quipu* (kee-poooh). *Quipu* means knot in Quechua, the native language of the Andes.

Quipu makers were very skilled. By making different kinds of knots on hundreds of different coloured strings, they knew how many people lived in the empire, how much food there was in storage, how many animals each person owned, and many other things. They also used *quipus* to remember weaving loom patterns, and even to help tell a story. Whenever they were used to tell a story, knots would be placed according to syllables and sounds.

You can keep track of things or events in your life the way the Incas did.

Quipu Craft

Supplies:

- Scissors
- Yarn – 6 different colours
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Cardboard
- Tape

Cut a foot long piece of yarn from each colour. Draw and cut out a rectangle of cardboard about 28 x 5 cm. Tape one end of each piece of yarn to the cardboard, spacing them equally apart. Above each piece of yarn, write the thing you want to keep track of. Make a knot for each thing you count, starting at the top of the yarn and working your way down. Leave some space between knots and don't pull too tightly.

This can be done as a single library program, where the kids can record things like the number of people in their family, the number of times they went to the movies last month, etc. Or they can take the *quipu* home and use it to record things as they happen over a week. This could be how many books they read, each time they played with a friend, etc. Then at the end of the week, they will have a record to help them remember what they did.

Memory Game

If you lived in ancient times, and had no way to make a list by writing things down, how well do you think you could remember things? Here's a fun way to test your memory. This game has many variations. See what works best for your group.

Supplies:

- Tray or plate
- 10-20 small items (try to have objects related to 'Lost Worlds', such as plastic dinosaurs, gold chocolate coins, toy horses, beads, etc.)
- Cloth or towel to cover tray

Have the kids sit in a circle, with the tray of objects in the middle. Give them one minute to look at it and memorize everything on the tray. Remove the tray or cover it and take one object away without them seeing it. Put the tray back, and have them guess which object is missing.

Variations:

Use more or less objects

Give kids more or less time to view the tray

Remove 3 or 4 objects

Instead of removing objects, have the kids tell you everything that they remember from the tray. Have a list of the objects and check it as they tell you. See if they get them all.

Concentration Memory Game

This is a simple but fun game to organize and play.

Supplies:

- 10 paper cups
- Jelly beans or other small candies

To set up the game:

Put the cups upside down in a row on a table

In a random order, put 1 candy under each of 2 cups, 2 candies under each of 2 cups, 3 candies under each of 2 cups, etc.

To play:

The first player lifts 2 cups. If the number of candies matches, he keeps them and the cups are removed. If they don't match, the cups are replaced, and the next player tries.

Remember not to let the players eat the candies until the end, as the winner is the one with the most candies after all the cups are gone.

Books and Stories

Read a folktale or legend from Peru or other South or Central American country.